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WARRIOR QUEEN OF MARS by
Alexander Blade

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Front cover painting by Robert Gibson Jones, illustrating
a scene from "Warrior Queen of Mars".

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WARRIOR QUEEN OF MARS



The warrior queen stepped forward and signified she held no animosity for him.



By Alexander Blade

Iceland was the perfect place for a secret military operation. We thought of it, but so had the Martians — ages ago . . .

THE DOCTOR'S name was Foster. If he had a first name or even initials, no one could remember them. He was called Dr. Foster; he signed his prescriptions with an almost illegible Foster; he

was so busy no one could gain his attention for more than a brief three or four seconds without being so ill that finding out his first name was farthest from their thoughts.

On top of that he was old, in a

well preserved, wiry, ageless sort of way. He had been looking sixty for all of the twenty some years he had been practicing in Reykjavik—which isn't on Mars, but is the biggest city in Iceland.

The woman lying unconscious in the snow appeared to be about twenty-one or two years old. Not that the doctor was interested in how old she was. And all she was wearing was some fur panties and a translucent pearl-blue bra that seemed to be made of a flexible plastic.

Dr. Foster braked his motor sled to a halt just beside her so that all he had to do was prepare a space for the unconscious form and lift it in.

He marveled at the perfection of her figure, and especially her face. She was definitely out of place anywhere outside of Hollywood. And, though the doctor didn't waste time on such an idle pursuit as measuring her height, one corner of his mind guessed she must be about six feet four inches.

He tossed furs over her and started up again. The place he had been going was still the nearest habitation, so he continued toward it.

It was a type of dwelling that would have been called a hodan in the southwest United States. Its walls and roof were a mixture of stone and dirt. To look at it one wouldn't think so, however, because its occupants had taken snow and plastered it thickly over it for added insulation, so that it looked more like an igloo. A very large igloo.

The owner came out indolently as Dr. Foster drew up before the entrance. He wore layers of furs, looking like a very filthy rag doll with a handful of hair for a beard pasted where the face ought to be.

"Give me a hand, Lars," Dr. Foster ordered, uncovering the woman.

There was an audible gasp of sur-

prise and wonder from Lars' unkempt beard. The doctor wasn't listening. His eyes were fixed on the unmelted snow still adhering to the flawless pink skin.

"She's dead?" Lars asked.

"I—it looks like she might be," Dr. Foster said. He pulled off a glove and searched for a pulse with expert fingers. "No! There's a heartbeat. Help me get her inside."

If Lars was more willing to help carry the woman than he would normally have been to do anything, it merely indicated that somewhere inside him was still a recognition and appreciation of the finer things of life.

Lars' wife took over officiously when they had staggered under their load into the stuffy, gloomy interior of the hodan.

With flatfooted, stoic motions she produced a pan of cold water and a surprisingly clean rag, and started gently massaging the flawless pink skin, while Lars watched with round eyes, and Dr. Foster with a professional frown.

"Wipe her dry," Dr. Foster ordered quietly after ten minutes of this.

Lars' wife did so. By the time she had finished, the skin seemed to be damp again. The doctor bent down to look closer. His frown deepened. The moisture was obviously perspiration.

While Lars and his wife stood silent, waiting for the doctor to tell them what to do, Dr. Foster went out to the sled and returned with his black bag. From it he took a thermometer, which he shook down and inserted under the unconscious woman's tongue.

While he waited he used his stethoscope. His face was expressionless. When he looked at the thermometer three minutes later, he frowned.

He had shaken the thermometer down to sixty-eight degrees. It was still at that point.

Still frowning, he searched in his black bag and brought out a laboratory thermometer he carried for measuring the temperature of hot water. It was ten inches long, with the gradations etched in it. He inserted it between the lax lips and held it upright with his hand, watching the top of the mercury column.

Five minutes later he was still looking at it, a glazed look in his eyes. The thermometer registered thirty-one degrees. And the delicate pink skin was bathed with moisture. Thin trickles and rivulets of moisture laced the flat stomach.

Finally Dr. Foster sighed deeply like one awakening from a dream, and drew the thermometer out. He put it away in his black case.

He stood up and looked down at the six feet four of female perfection. Suddenly he bent over and touched the skin at the solar plexus with his tongue.

With a grunt of satisfaction he straightened, licking his lips. That perspiration was almost, if not entirely, pure grain alcohol!

THE MAN was bundled up so that, with his huge goggles, there was barely a total of two square inches of his skin showing. But no one around him would have noticed him anyway, in all probability, since everyone was concerned with his or her own thoughts, preparing to board the huge four motor plane on the concrete strip just outside the waiting room.

The man merged with the crowd around the gate. When he was surrounded by people he took something out of his pocket. It was a can of the type that generally carry d. d. t. for spraying, with a small valve in one end that would spray when the button

on it was pressed down.

He did just that as he shoved gently through the crowd toward the gate. Nothing seemed to happen, nor did the man seem to be expecting anything to happen.

Finally he stood near the guard at the gate. His movements seemed to be slightly impatient now. He squirted at the guard, waited for several seconds, then boldly walked past the guard onto the field toward the plane.

One of the mechanics refuelling the plane glanced up at him and returned to his work. It was the job of the gate guard to prevent anyone from going to the plane ahead of time unless they were supposed to, and the guard was standing at the gate without making any attempt to call the man back, so it must be all right.

The bundled up man walked up the ramp without being stopped. He paused at the door of the plane, looked around, his large glasses winking owlshly in the feeble sunlight, then stuck his hand inside the plane and squirted some of the contents of the can in there.

A moment later he stepped in the plane. There were two stewardesses standing in the aisle. They were looking at him as he stepped in, but they neither smiled nor gave any other indication of being aware of his presence.

He walked around them, being careful not to touch them, and walked up toward the front of the plane. Two thirds of the way up to the door leading to the pilot compartment the man stopped.

The seats here were made up of four individual seats connected together, making one long seat at least seven feet wide. The man got down on the floor and carefully rolled under the seat. There was just room enough for him to do so.

He twisted his head around, apparently making sure he wasn't too noticeable. There was just room for him to maneuver one of his arms. He put the spray can in the pocket of his fur coat, took off one fur glove by pulling on it with his teeth, reached into an inside pocket and brought out something that looked like a small capsule, popped that into his mouth, worked his glove back on, straightened out his body and turned over on his stomach and pulled one arm up as a cushion for his head.

He swallowed loudly once, apparently finding it difficult to swallow the capsule without a drink. After that he didn't move. The passengers boarded the plane, occupying every seat. The foot of one of them kicked against him. Its owner bent down and saw nothing but a pile of inert furs, and straightened up, his curiosity satisfied.

The plane took off. The two stewardesses went about their business of checking the passengers without apparently seeing him. In fact, they would have had to get down on hands and knees to see him through the forest of legs that concealed him.

It landed at La Guardia Field. The passengers all got off. After a while the pilot and co-pilot and the two stewardesses left the plane. A tractor hooked on and dragged it into a large hangar for going over before its return trip.

Two janitors entered the passenger part of the ship and began up at the pilot's compartment, working slowly. The man under the seats lifted his head, listened for a moment, then rolled out from under the seats and sat up cautiously.

He didn't lift his head far enough so that the janitors could see him if they chanced to be looking that way. Instead, he brought out the can and did some spraying.

When he stood up the two janitors were standing where they had been at work, apparently deep in thought. They seemed not to notice the man when he rose and calmly walked down the aisle, and left the ship, still wearing his furs.

IT WAS dark outside the hangar. The sky was high and very blue, dotted with twinkling stars. There was no snow on the ground, but it was far from warm.

The man walked along the edge of the runway strip from the hangar to a side gate. There was a small shack there. As he approached the shack a guard came out. The guard opened his mouth to make some comment.

The man sprayed the guard from the can he was holding in his hand. The guard's mouth remained open, as though he had forgotten it. He seemed to be looking across the field, lost in thought, as the man in furs opened the gate and walked out.

He stood at the curb, apparently waiting for someone, without looking back at the guard who remained staring off across the field.

A low slung black sedan that had been parked next to the curb a block away started up, gained speed, then pulled to a stop in front of the man in furs. He opened the front door of the car and climbed in.

As the car pulled away, the guard seemed to come to life. He closed his mouth. His eyes looked where the man in furs had been standing when he squirted him. He blinked his eyes several times, licked his lips nervously and went back in the shack.

The black sedan sped across town to an apartment building just off Fifth Avenue. The man in furs got out alone. He entered the building as the sedan drove off.

Inside were four people just coming out of the elevator. They opened

their eyes and their mouths simultaneously in astonishment. He calmly squirted them, then stepped past them into the elevator and pushed the button for the fifth floor. The elevator door closed with the four people still standing where they had been.

On the fifth floor he pushed the elevator button for the third floor and stepped out before the door closed. The hall was deserted. He went to the nearest door and, using a key, opened it and entered.

Turning on the light, he began divesting himself of his furs without even a glance around, as though it were his own apartment and he had left it only a short time before. With the furs and goggles off he was revealed as a rather muscular young man with a high, intelligent forehead, wide mouth, black hair combed straight back, and an expensive suit that looked like it had been slept in.

He carried the furs into the bedroom, hastily completed his disrobing, and dived under the shower. Ten minutes later, with fresh clothing on and a shave, he lit a cigarette and sat down at the desk in the living room.

He picked up the phone and dialed a number, his cigarette dangling from lazy lips. The phone at the other end didn't complete its first ring. A voice barked, "Hello!" so loudly the young man winced.

"Curt Widner," the young man said. "Just got in ten minutes ago."

"What'd you find?" the voice at the other end barked.

"If I told you, you'd think I'm crazy like we thought Mosely was," Widner said, his grin moving his cigarette to the side of his face.

"You mean he was sane?" the voice at the other end said incredulously. The young man was holding the receiver away from his ear to protect it.

"Perfectly, Mr. Rains," he said.

DR. FOSTER, his breath forming a cloud of steam each time he exhaled, squatted by the sled and watched the woman—or girl. It was hard for him to think of a well formed girl six feet four inches tall.

Her breast rose and fell rhythmically in sleep or unconsciousness. It was really a combination of both, so far as he could make out. She didn't seem to be drugged. At least she exhibited none of the usual symptoms of being drugged—except that she wouldn't awaken. His examination had revealed no sign of injury. But it had brought out some rather interesting facts.

Her eyes were purple with tawny orange stars, but were normal in shape. Her fingernails and toenails were paper thin and the skin under them was a bright red. Her hair was a rich brown in color, and so fine that it seemed to be strands of pure silk rather than hair.

He had moved her back out into the freezing air because she had begun to show signs of real discomfort in the warmth of the hodan. With air that would have frozen a normal skin blowing on her from the slight breeze, she seemed to relax in comfort, and since she seemed to breathe normally, he was forced to conclude that for some reason her temperature of one degree below freezing was normal to her.

It shocked his scientific mind, but he was forced to accept facts as they were. He wished he had a portable laboratory handy to make blood tests, a microscope to make detailed examinations, but he had nothing except his bag of ordinary diagnostic tools and an assortment of sulfas and shots. All he could do was wait until she recovered consciousness.

The sun had set hours ago, and a bloated moon hung low on the south-

ern horizon when it finally penetrated that perhaps he had something more than just a medical curiosity on his hands. He had coordinated the fact of the woman's perspiration being largely alcohol with the fact that not even an alcoholic can absorb enough to sweat it out in pure form. He had coordinated the fact that she was alive with a body temperature of one degree below freezing with the fact that no human being could remain alive, let alone perspire, at that temperature.

Now, suddenly, the realization struck him that this meant that the unconscious woman wasn't Icelandic, American, English, nor any other race of people. He examined her features more closely. He pulled back an eyelid again and studied her eye.

It was possible that changing from a water metabolism to an alcohol metabolism could produce the unusual color and shape of the iris, and the paper-thin fingernails and toenails. But body cells couldn't just change in such a basic thing in one generation.

As he looked at her and thought about these things the realization grew on him that, human though she might be in form, she was farther from the human of known races than any animal.

Was she from some other planet? Dr. Foster look speculatively up at the sky, as though he might find the answer there. Then he let his eyes drop to his more immediate surroundings and slowly surveyed the bleak expanse of snow covered wasteland that stretched to the horizon in all directions, to the uninviting canyons that cut into the mountain that rose in back of the hodan. There was no movement visible on that white panorama except the almost iridescent swirl of fine snow caught up by the night wind here and there.

Nodding to himself as if he had reached some conclusion, he took off his heavy gloves and extracted a prescription pad and a pencil from somewhere within the depths of his thick coat.

He wrote slowly, stopping often to ponder what he had written. When he finished he stood up and went inside the hodan.

"Charlie," he said, shaking the sleeping male occupant.

"Huh?" Charlie said, turning over and blinking up at him.

"Get up, Charlie," Dr. Foster said. "I want you to take a message in to Reykjavik and give it to the telegraph man at the airport."

Without protest or question Charlie rolled over and got up. He took the piece of paper and carefully put it in a pocket, then dropped an enormous fur parka onto his already overloaded shoulders.

The snowshoes he strapped to his back were not for the journey on the hardpacked snow, but were taken in case it snowed before he got back.

He left without glancing at his wife, who was watching from her own pile of furs without moving. Dr. Foster followed him out and resumed his vigil, now and then looking in the direction Charlie had gone, and following his progress until he disappeared from view.

DR. THOMAS S. FARMER was considered the world's foremost biochemist. The list of his discoveries in medicine read like the pharmaceutical catalogue—and took up a good part of it. He was the world's greatest experimental ornithologist. He had discovered five types of insect blood, and had isolated and catalogued the components of each type. He was considered one of the greatest mathematicians in the world, having discovered the basic fallacy of

early twentieth century infinity theory and redefined the mathematical point to eliminate that fallacy. He was listed as one of the three greatest physicists, having advanced the theory that the mean density of stars would remain a constant no matter how far larger and larger telescopes penetrated space—a theory that had come to be generally accepted recently. He was a leading authority on education, having formulated an educational program for primary schools which would actually increase intelligence and alter aptitudes.

Anyone in the world who cared to could send ten dollars to Lloyds of London and receive by return mail a nicely engraved certificate entitling him to a thousand dollars in cash if Dr. Farmer died within twelve months from date of purchase. It had become a popular international lottery, and of the thirty to a hundred million dollars Lloyds made on it each year, they handed ten percent directly over to the doctor. This was very unusual, since Dr. Farmer was already well over a hundred years of age and therefore should have been considered out of bonds for insurance companies. Legally dead, so to speak.

But it was no more unusual than his appearance, which was that of a man of perhaps twenty-eight years of age. This in itself did not seem unusual unless one knew who the apparently young man was.

And since most people recognized him at once when he appeared in public, he very seldom appeared in public—or so the public was led to believe.

His secretary and errand boy, a man somewhat older in appearance, with a squarer jaw and darker complexion, was something different. No one paid much attention to him. Reporters had found that anything he

said would almost certainly later be denied by Dr. Farmer himself. Officials and businessmen had found that any messages they sent through him to the doctor generally didn't reach that famous man. So Jack Tracey had come to be totally ignored by everyone except as a curiosity. And no one except a very few very important people knew that Jack Tracey and Dr. Thomas S. Farmer were one and the same man.

If the messenger boy who brought the telegram to Dr. Farmer's New Jersey country estate had known of Jack Tracey's reputation for unreliability he would have insisted on seeing the doctor in person before relinquishing the yellow envelope.

If he had seen Jack Tracey rip the envelope open the minute the door was closed he would have been even more doubtful. But before his motor tricycle found a break in traffic so it could scoot onto the highway and head back to town, Jack Tracey had connected with the airport and made a reservation on the next plane for Reykjavik under the name of Frank Bond.

As Frank Bond he had an apartment in Greenwich Village and a reputation of seldom being home. Also as Frank Bond he had a reputation of being a fairly prolific writer of mysteries that were consistently good.

After he had made the reservation and learned his plane would leave in six hours, he called the telegraph office in Newark and sent a reply, informing Dr. Foster that he was sending a thoroughly capable man, Frank Bond, to investigate.

That done, he repaired to his makeup room behind the bookcase in his bedroom and spent half an hour transforming himself into Frank Bond.

As Frank he was an inch taller, which makes a difference when you

are five feet eight, and considerably more muscular in build. His hair, normally parted and loosely combed, was still the same shade of gray, but combed straight back and plastered down. His clothes were in better taste and more expensive than those usually seen on Dr. Farmer. His teeth were whiter and slightly irregular.

He had crossed the bedroom and entered the spacious front room when the doorbell rang again. Hesitating only for the barest instant, he went to answer it.

"Is Dr. Farmer in?" one of the three men standing outside asked politely.

"Why, no," Frank Bond said, his eyes flicking over the three men and growing uneasy. "He left just a few moments ago."

"Who are you?" the man asked, pushing past him and entering the house. The other two men followed with that air of confident insolence posed by a man who habitually gains his courage from a gun.

"I'm Frank Bond," the disguised Dr. Farmer said, assuming an air of mystification. "I gather you're friends of the doctor. He was called to Iceland, I believe, on some extremely urgent business, and is catching the next plane. If it's important I think you can catch him at the La Guardia Airport if you hurry."

The three men grinned at him wolfishly.

"Thanks. It is urgent," the spokesman said.

"I'll call the airport and have him paged," Frank Bond said as the men hurried out the door.

"Do that," one of them said over his shoulder.

Dr. Farmer, disguised as Frank Bond watched them as they got in the lowslung black sedan and sped recklessly down the driveway.

Then he went to the phone and

called—not La Guardia—but the Newark airport. When he hung up he was smiling his satisfaction. In half an hour he would be taking off for Iceland in a chartered plane.

FRANK BOND, the writer, landed at the Reykjavik airport four hours ahead of the plane he had wired that he was arriving on. Consequently he wasn't surprised that there was no one there to meet him. With four hours to kill he decided to do a little scouting around.

Before he had walked across the waiting room of the airport to the newstand he became aware of something. Some sort of joke was extremely popular, having infinite variations that were being tossed around on all sides. The gist of the humor seemed to center around "the little man who wasn't there".

He bought the local paper and went into the coffee shop and sat down at the counter. He had slept during the later part of the trip over the Atlantic. So he ordered a breakfast of ham and eggs and coffee. Then he opened the paper.

The headlines captured his immediate interest. They read, MYSTERY OF DISAPPEARING MAN GROWS. A full double column told of the developments in the mystery, beginning with the latest development, the account of the guard at a side gate at La Guardia Field who claimed that a man answering the description of the reports from Iceland had approached his gate shortly after the plane from Sweden had been taken into a hangar for checkup.

"I noticed that he was dressed unusually," the guard said, "but I didn't think anything about it. I stepped out of my shack to inform him that only known employees were allowed to use my gate. Suddenly he seemed to vanish before my very

eyes. I blinked, and he was gone. I turned around quickly. I could see fifty yards in every direction, but he wasn't in sight. I would have kept quiet about it, but he answered the description published in these other reports exactly, so I know I wasn't seeing things."

The account went on to tell of the previous appearances of the mysterious man who was bundled up in furs and wore goggles. His first known appearance was at the Reykjavik Airport; but the reporter who wrote the article predicted that accounts of him being seen in Sweden would turn up, and that he was probably a Surussian spy or refugee going to the United States without passport. The reporter made no attempt to solve the mystery of how the man had managed to disappear so many times and while so many different people were looking directly at him.

Dr. Farmer read the newspaper account carefully several times while he ate slowly. He disagreed with the reporter on where the mysterious little man who wasn't there originated, but he did so with the conviction that he had more to go on.

What did he have to go on? He took the telegram out of his pocket and read it for the hundredth time. It read, "Have discovered extraterrestrial human female with C three H eight O three metabolism. Urgent. Danger. Ask at window for Charlie. Reply time of arrival."

That gave no hint of any connection with the man who wasn't there, but it seemed a certainty there must be a definite connection. There were the three strangers who had arrived shortly after the telegraph boy. They too were almost certainly connected with the other two facets of the budding mystery.

There was a radio playing softly at the far end of the coffee shop. The

music was suddenly interrupted by a male voice.

"We interrupt this program to bring you the latest bulletin. The plane that was due to arrive at the Reykjavik Airport in a little over three hours has not made its scheduled flight report. That report is ten minutes overdue. The airport radio operator has not been able to get a response to his call signals from the plane. There is as yet no cause for alarm— A report was just handed to me. The U.S.S. Nielson just radioed that an explosion took place high in the stratosphere and several miles north of the ship fifteen minutes ago. The position of the U.S.S. Nielson is approximately that of the plane, so it is possible that what they saw was an explosion on the plane itself. The ship has turned off its course to investigate. We will bring you whatever message its skipper sends as soon as it is received."

Tom Farmer crumpled his newspaper. He dropped a dollar bill on the counter and left the coffee shop, noting the white faces around him, and compressing his lips grimly.

"So they planted a bomb to kill me and prevent me from getting here," he said in his thoughts. "At least seventy-five people, on the off chance that I was among them in some disguise."

THE ATMOSPHERE of jocularity that had been in the waiting room was gone. People stood around in quiet groups. Tom went to the ticket window and asked the way to the telegraph office. He learned that there were two. One in the same building, and one in town.

There were half a dozen taxis outside. He got into the first one in line and gave the driver orders to go to the telegraph office in Reykjavik.

As his cab pulled away from the

airport building he twisted around and looked through the rear window. He saw two men getting into the second taxi.

He frowned. It could mean nothing, or it could mean they intended to follow him. Did he want that yet? He studied the problem. What he wanted to do if possible was get in touch with Charlie before the time the plane was supposed to arrive. At the telegraph office he might at least get a description of the man so that he could identify him when he ran across him.

He looked back. The taxi was still following, but it would have to anyway, since there was no other road as yet. He settled back, deciding to let things take their course.

Ten minutes later when he got out at the telegraph office the other cab was not in sight.

The man behind the counter in the telegraph office was in his late thirties, of Danish or Scandinavian descent. When Tom Farmer entered the man laid his pipe carefully on the ashtray on his sending desk and came to the counter.

"I'm looking for a man named Charlie," Tom said. "He sent a telegram several hours ago and received a reply."

The smile on the operator's face vanished abruptly.

"You're the second man asking for Charlie," he said. "I wish now I hadn't given the first one his description. Who are you?"

"Frank Bond," Tom said.

The operator looked at him keenly, then seemed to make up his mind.

"Charlie is a backhills character," he said. "There aren't many of them. You won't have any trouble finding him. He has a beard that's never been washed or combed, and will be so bundled up in motheaten furs that you can see nothing except the furs and beard. He has a mud and rock

sty about fifteen miles due north of town in the foothills."

"How much did you tell the other man who asked about him?" Tom asked.

"The same, Dr. Farmer," the operator said quietly. "I wish I hadn't. And don't try to deny that you're Dr. Farmer. Your disguise would fool most people, but the shape of your ears and your eyes give you away to me."

"O. K.," Tom said, sighing. "It might be wise if someone knows. There seems to be something going on that has a great deal of danger connected with it." He sketched the events he knew of.

The operator nodded gravely as Tom spoke.

"I've been thinking some about that telegram Charlie sent myself," he said. "By the way, my name's Nels Larson." He shook hands gravely with Tom. "The way I see it," he said, going to his desk and picking up his pipe, "is that some Martians or something have landed somewhere on Iceland, and they got into the wrong hands. That girl Dr. Foster has is one of the visitors. The little man who wasn't there may be one, but I think he's one of the gang that found them, and he just used one of their things to make it easier for him to get back to the States and get reinforcements—and maybe financial backing.

"There would be millions in it for unscrupulous people. Scientific devices the world had never heard of. Hundreds of patents could be obtained. They could even patent the spaceship and control space travel with their patents. The only way they can do that is to keep it secret that a Martian spaceship had really landed."

"Maybe you're right, Nels," Tom said. "Certainly there must be mil-

lions of dollars at stake for even an utterly unscrupulous group to deliberately kill seventy or more people just to get at me, as they did if they blew up that plane."

He took out a cigarette and lit it thoughtfully.

"I may be running into real trouble," he went on. "Here's what I want you to do. Keep everything quiet for three days. If I'm not in here in that time notify the police and also send this wire to the State Department at Washington."

He wrote hastily on a telegraph blank. When he finished he handed it to Nels.

"Put it in your safe and keep it locked," he said. "I think someone was able to come in and read the telegram Charlie sent under your very eyes without you knowing."

"Huh?" Nels exclaimed.

"If the little man who wasn't there could vanish right in front of people's eyes," Tom said, "maybe he could remain invisible while he came in and read the telegrams on your spindle."

"Maybe you're right," Nels said gloomily. He looked around half fearfully, picked up the written telegram and went to the open safe and put it in a locked drawer. When he came back to the counter his mood changed.

"There's something I've always wanted to find out," he said. "Does diet have anything to do with your experiment on immortality? I know you refuse to give out any information until you either die or reach the age of a hundred and fifty in good health, so you can be sure no harmful effects develop; but I thought maybe you could give out a little information that would maybe keep me going strong a few extra years."

"No," Tom Farmer said, his voice kindly, "diet has little or nothing to do with it. It's an extremely delicate balance of chemicals that do specific

things to the body. The main ones are harmful by themselves, so I can't just pass out part of the thing. It has to be all or none, so it will have to be none."

"I expected as much," Nels said, sighing. "But there was no harm in trying." He grinned sourly. "Maybe you'd better hope that immortality stuff prevents your death by accident too."

"Sorry," Tom said, grinning broadly. "I'm as vulnerable to a bullet as you are."

HE RETURNED to his waiting cab and ordered the driver to go back to the airport. That would be the best place to start looking for Charlie.

As the cab left the thickly settled part of Reykjavik, Tom remembered the two men and the cab. He twisted and looked back down the narrow, snow covered highway. Two blocks back was a cab. It might be the two men following him—or it might be merely a routine cab trip not connected with him. There was no way of finding out.

At the airport he paid the cab driver and went inside, stopping just inside the door to wait for the other cab to arrive. A moment later it pulled up.

A man climbed out. He wasn't either of the two who had climbed into a cab when he left the airport. He was carrying what seemed to be a can wrapped in paper. The can had apparently been rolled up in the paper and the ends bent over loosely. He held it gripped in his fingers with one finger holding down the folds of wrapping paper on one end.

The man wore goggles. They were the type many people wore in the north in the winter. There was nothing unusual about them, nor about the man himself.

Tom Farmer left the doorway and circled about the waiting room looking for Charlie. He found him almost at once, sitting sound asleep on a bench. He shook him gently.

"Are you Charlie?" he asked.

"Sure," was the matter of fact answer.

"I'm Frank Bond," Tom said.

Charlie stood up, fully awake.

"Come," he ordered. He headed toward the exit with the peculiar stride men who walk great distances assume.

Tom glanced around the waiting room. The man who had just arrived in the cab was at the ticket window talking to the agent. Other people were standing about, numbed expressions on their faces. Evidently positive confirmation of the plane's being wrecked hadn't come in yet.

Before Tom and Charlie reached the exit four men suddenly came to life and hurried out. When Tom got outside two of the men had entered cabs alone, and the other two had entered the third cab. That left only the cab that had followed him out from Reykjavik.

Tom's eyes narrowed in suspicion. The other three cabs were in motion. The fourth cab pulled forward even with him and Charlie. The driver reached back and opened the door.

Charlie was climbing in without waiting.

"Pardon me, but could I ride back to town with you?" a polite voice asked. Tom turned his head. It was the man with the wrapped can.

Tom blinked his eyes, then blinked them again in amazement. Instead of standing by the cab he was comfortably seated in it, and it was already nearing the city limits.

Charlie was wedged against him. The man with the can was next to Charlie. The cab driver turned his head and glanced at him.

"He's awake," he said.

Tom jerked his eyes to the man on the other side of Charlie. He saw the wrapped can start to rise. He closed his eyes. When nothing happened he opened them again. The cab was speeding along a residential street! Tom closed his eyes quickly. The driver had been busy with traffic and hadn't seen him.

Through slitted lids he looked sideways at the man with the can. It was obvious now that whatever caused the lapse of consciousness was contained in that innocent appearing can. It was squirted out like d. d. t. is sprayed. Did it act through the eyes exclusively. Or were the goggles merely an added precaution?

The cab was slowing down. The driver was in on this thing too, and they were nearing their destination. It could be the large white house just ahead. There was no time to lose.

Tom lunged suddenly. His fingers closed about the can. He jerked and felt it come free. Without thinking he swung the can against the man's head and felt it connect. He saw him start to slump and turned his attention to the driver.

The driver had stepped on the gas. Now he was frantically trying to turn the cab into the driveway of the white house. Tom hit him on the back of the head with the end of the can. The driver tried to avoid the blow. In trying to avoid it he let the car straighten out. It skidded briefly, then crashed sidewise into a light pole on the curb at the side of the driveway.

Tom was cushioned by Charlie and the stranger. He opened the door and half dragged Charlie out.

Charlie stood up when his feet touched the ground. He stood passively, his eyes staring straight ahead. He was still in that mysterious blankness. Tentatively Tom started to lead him along the sidewalk. Charlie's feet

moved obediently.

"Run," Tom ordered, pulling on Charlie's hand. Charlie began to run in a clodding shuffle. Tom ran along beside him, guiding him. He put the mysterious can in his coat pocket.

At the corner he stole a quick look back at the scene of the wreck. There were several men there. One had a gun out, and another was apparently arguing with him.

Charlie stumbled and fell with a surprised exclamation. He had recovered consciousness. Tom smiled at the realization that apparently an instant ago, to Charlie, he had been in the car. He had blinked his eyes to find himself running on the sidewalk!

"Get up, Charlie," he said. "We've got to run for it."

He saw Charlie shake his head and look back the way they had come. There was the sound of a shot. At the same instant the snow kicked up several yards away on the sidewalk. Charlie needed no more coaxing.

IT TOOK half an hour for Tom and Charlie to reach the outskirts of town. They traveled on foot. After it became certain that they had shaken off pursuit Charlie had insisted that it was his job to take Frank Bond to Dr. Foster and "the woman", and wouldn't listen to anything else. He had shaken his head violently to Tom's suggestion that they get help from the Reykjavik police.

"No," he said. "Dr. Foster said to bring you. I bring you. No monkey business." That seemed to be a favorite phrase of the man behind the most unkempt beard in the world. He repeated it, savoring its flavor. "No monkey business."

So Tom let him have his head, and managed to always remain half a step behind his guide so that Charlie had to turn his head to see him.

As he hurried along, taking three

steps to Charlie's two, he studied the man. When they reached open country and no one was in sight for the mile or two to the horizon in every direction, Tom took the can out of his pocket carefully. His fingers explored the valve under the paper until he was sure he knew which way it would spray.

At an opportune moment he pointed it so that the spray would shoot ahead of Charlie and pressed down briefly. Nothing seemed to happen. Charlie kept walking.

Tom increased his pace until he could see the man's eyes. They were blank. Breathing a sigh of relief, Tom put out his hand and stopped him.

Then, hooking his fingers in the dirty beard, he pulled. The beard came loose. The face that was revealed was rather square cut, the chin strong. It was the face of a Georgian, a White Russian. It was cleanshaven.

Tom nodded in satisfaction. He had noted little things that made him feel Charlie was not what he appeared to be. His beard had been unkempt, but his eyebrows had been trimmed. He wore filthy rags under his motheaten fur parka, but there was a smell of talcum and shave lotion around him.

Thoughtfully Tom replaced the beard and started the man to walking again. After a few moments the supposed Charlie turned and glanced at him suspiciously, but said nothing.

Tom smiled to himself. The spray was strange stuff. It blanked out consciousness so subtly it was difficult to be sure. It was a potent weapon.

It was nearly five hours before they topped a slight rise and the sled with Dr. Foster standing beside it came into view.

It was really Dr. Foster. Tom remembered him. He had met him thirty or forty years before in New York at a meeting of the A.M.A.

Dr. Foster started toward them the moment they came into view. He met them a hundred yards from the sled and the ghostly mound that was the hodan.

"Dr. Farmer!" Dr. Foster exclaimed. "I'm glad you could come."

"I'm sorry, Dr. Foster, but I'm not Dr. Farmer," Tom said, winking at the doctor so that Charlie didn't see him do it. "I'm Frank Bond, a friend of Farmer's. He was busy and sent me."

"Oh that's too bad," Dr. Foster said, frowning, but indicating by his manner that he had caught the wink and would play along. "Has Charlie told you about the woman?"

"No," Charlie muttered. He turned his face away and went on toward the hodan, leaving the two doctors alone.

"What's wrong?" Dr. Foster asked in a low voice.

"I wish I knew, doctor," Tom said gravely. "There isn't time to go into it now. Show me what you've found."

THE SUPPOSED Charlie had gone into the hodan. Dr. Foster led the way to the sled, but when Tom caught a glimpse of the figure lying there he increased his steps.

He thought he saw the woman's eyes flash open for an instant, but couldn't be sure. When he knelt over her she seemed to be unconscious.

He pulled back an eyelid. The eye remained unmoving. It was a very unusual eye in every respect. At one time Tom had made a study of iris patterns, not only of all races of humans, but of many animals. It had been a lengthy study.

It was possible to tell whether a person had been drinking, from their eyes. It was possible to tell whether even a sixty-fourth mixture of some races was present in the owners of the eyes. It was generally possible to tell the nationality of a person by

his eyes.

Whether Dr. Foster knew any of this or not, he had been right. The beautiful amazon, judging from her eyes alone, was not a member of any race of Earth! She was human, yes; but so far removed from Earth races that she was of an unknown race.

Tom let the lid close, marvelling at the girl's self control if she were conscious. He was beginning to doubt that he had actually seen her open her eyes to look at him.

He let his eyes roam over her perfect figure with its flawless skin of delicate pink, and felt his heart quicken its beat, and his breath come faster.

He swallowed loudly in the frozen, soundless hush that hung over things. Then, taking the can out of his pocket, he squirted a fine spray of its contents into her face.

"What was that?" Dr. Foster asked curiously.

"I'll tell you later," Tom said. "Right now I want to bind her hands and feet together. It wouldn't do for her to recover consciousness and suddenly get up and run away. Judging from her legs she could outrun us easily."

"You're right," Dr. Foster said. "I never thought of that. I have just the things in the sled. Sometimes I have an unruly patient who objects to being taken care of."

He rummaged through a pile of things in a box and brought out canvas straps. Tom hurriedly fastened them in place. He had used the barest minimum of the spray.

Almost at once the girl opened her eyes. Anger flooded her face. Her lips opened as if to speak. Then—

It was the strangest melody Tom had ever heard. Its notes were fluid, rich and staccato as those of a piano. They coursed over three octaves of soprano, each note blending with the next, so rapid did they succeed one

another in musical tones.

It was speech, in a way, as though the notes of an electric organ had been attached to the keys of a typewriter, each note being sounded by a letter of the alphabet as a rapid typist copied the pages of a book. There was no slightest enunciation. Just pure and incredibly rich tones.

Still emitting the rapid jumble of melody she sat up, tossing her head imperiously, her nostrils flaring.

Unsuspected muscles appeared under the smooth skin of her arms as she strained at her bonds. Tom watched her, speechless with admiration. Her rich brown hair, so fine in texture that it seemed a mere cloud, was caught in the wind.

She seemed to notice the admiration in his eyes suddenly. Her musical explosion stopped. She arched her head, smiling. She held out her bound wrists toward him, a pleading expression on her face.

Tom felt his senses reel. She excited emotions in him that he had thought were completely dead. Without thinking he undid her wrist straps.

She was nodding her head happily and speaking in her rapid fire melody of pure notes. It was unbelievable, beautiful beyond description.

The spell of her voice was shattered more abruptly and more completely than the breaking of a glass by a harsh voice.

"Don't move, any of you," it said.

Tom, Dr. Foster, and the girl turned their heads slowly in the direction of the sound. It was Charlie, standing just outside the hodan, a repeater rifle to his shoulder. Beside him, a malicious smile on her lips, stood Charlie's wife.

"Don't you know that isn't your husband?" Tom said to her.

"I know," she said. "But he's promised me riches so I can go to America and live. That is better than Charlie."

Tom stole a glance at the girl. Her eyes held a puzzled frown. She was studying Charlie and seemed to be trying to understand his words.

Charlie looked past them toward the distant rise that was the horizon. From his beard came a loud, shrill whistle.

Tom dropped his hand and unfastened the buckle of the canvas belt that still held the girl's ankles. He kept his eyes on Charlie while he did so. When it was done and he had his hand elevated again he stole a glance at her. She flashed him a knowing smile that made him short of breath.

THERE WERE men coming toward them. They were on skis and were travelling swiftly. Tom counted them. There were ten of them. They turned their skis and used the edges to brake to a stop. It was then that Tom saw the small motors fastened to their backs, with propellers.

The motors, from their lack of sound, were the new gasoline turbines, miniature turbine weighing barely fifty pounds and capable of generating thirty horsepower.

They were speaking to Charlie in a strange language. From a familiar sounding word here and there Tom knew that it was Russian.

His eyes widened as he recognized one of the men. He was a man that the new Russian government had offered rewards totalling over a million dollars for. He was the last of the old Stalinist Government. The only one who had escaped.

Tom felt a hand slipping into his pocket. The girl was stealthily taking the spray can out.

Some of the Russians were stepping out of their skis and showing intentions of coming over to look at her.

Tom fixed his eyes on the horizon and gave a muffled exclamation of



surprise and pleasure. Startled, the men turned to see what he was looking at. Tom felt the can leave his pocket and smiled.

"What did you see?" the leader of the Russians asked.

"Nothing," Tom said.

The man walked up to him taking off a heavy glove. When he reached Tom he suddenly slapped him viciously across the side of the face with it.

Tom fell, dazed, landing on his hands and knees. He shook his head, trying to clear it.

Something heavy fell on him, flattening him so that his face pressed momentarily into the snow. Dimly he heard angry shouts.

He pushed upward and felt something slide off his back. He rolled over and sat up. The girl was gone from the sled. And in the distance he



It was her moment to escape. As they drew closer she pointed the spray can at them and a misty stream enveloped them...

could see fast moving figures on the snow, heading toward the northern skyline.

It confused him for a moment. They couldn't have gone that far in such a short time. Then his eyes encountered the spray can in its paper wrapper lying by the sled and he understood. He picked up the can and put it in his pocket.

She had used it on the one who had slapped him with the glove, and chosen the moment of confusion to try to escape. She would be caught quickly by the men on skis with motor driven propellers on their backs. They would catch her and speed back. He would have to take advantage of every second while they were gone.

Dr. Foster was lying on the snow unconscious. Tom examined him briefly and decided the old man had

probably been knocked out rather than gassed with the spray.

He let him lay and quickly bound the Russian with the canvas straps he had used on the girl. That done, he went into the hodan. Charlie's wife was crumpled in a miserable heap on her bed of furs, sobbing heart-brokenly. The man who had masqueraded as Charlie wasn't there.

Tom wasted no time inside. A brief glance around had shown him there were no weapons around. Charlie had probably owned just the one rifle, a basic necessity for survival.

HE HURRIED outside and lifted Dr. Foster into the sled and started the motor. The sled was undoubtedly much slower than the men on skis. There wasn't much hope of either catching up with them or of

being able to accomplish anything singlehanded if he did.

He turned the sled about and headed back toward Reykjavik to get help. And as he drove, peering ahead until he was suffering from snow blindness, the face and tawny eyes of the strange girl rose in his mind. Her melody speech sang in his ears.

The thought came to him that he was falling in love with her. He shook his head in emphatic denial. Her alcohol metabolism made her even more unattainable than her probable extra-terrestrial origin and strange speech.

But suddenly something clicked in his thoughts that made him suck in his breath sharply. It was his charts on his own metabolism. His experiment on immortality had been going on for sixty-three years now. Slowly, over those years, his own body had been altering its processes. One of the major changes was the alcoholic content of his body. It had been increasing until now it was greater than that of a normal person could ever get and remain conscious. It was still less than two percent, but it was increasing at a rate that would bring it to better than eighty percent in a thousand years if the curve kept going up.

The implications made him weak. It was impossible, of course. His thoughts brought several basic body elements to mind from his vast well of knowledge. Those elements weren't alcohol soluble, nor could they form without ionization.

The sound of a rifle report broke off his thoughts. He looked back and saw two skiers speeding toward him. They were still half a mile away. He turned back and pressed the throttle as far down as it would go.

A moment later he rounded a curve and saw the edge of Reykjavik just ahead. It would be close. He cursed

desperately. He heard a shouted command and looked back again. The two skiers were a mere hundred yards away. One of them was sinking into a crouch to take careful aim with his rifle.

Tom slid down as far as he could so as to present as small a target as possible.

There was the sound of another shot. With it came a dull thump from somewhere in the sled. It was followed by several shots in rapid succession, sounding more like pistols than rifle shots, and coming from ahead.

He lifted his head enough to look. Several blue uniformed men were coming toward him on skis. It was the police!

"I TELL you we've got to hurry!" Tom said irritably.

"What's the hurry?" the gray haired police chief said unperturbed. "They can't get away."

"That's what you think," Tom said. "There's a ship somewhere out there that's quite capable of leaving the Earth."

"A spaceship?" the chief said skeptically. "Did you see it?"

"No," Tom confessed. "But I'm sure it's there."

"Our men are pursuing those two who shot at you," the chief said. "If they lose them, all we have to do is telegraph the other towns to be on the watch. We've notified the Russian Government that their man is here in Iceland and invited them to send planes and men to search for him. Frankly, I don't have the budget to place more men on this."

"I'll foot the bill," Tom groaned. When the chief shook his head he went on, "Then is there anything against my chartering a plane and going after them myself?"

"You can do that, of course," the

chief said. "But we can't be responsible for your safety."

"To hell with that!" Tom said, rising. He paused at the door. "You could at least give me the protection of a police car to the airport and make sure I can get a plane."

Sighing, the chief rose from his desk and followed Tom into the front of the police station where he ordered two men to take Tom to the airport.

At the airport as he was hurrying across the waiting room to the air traffic office he saw the pilot who had brought him to Reykjavik from the Newark field.

"Hello!" Tom said, frantically searching his mind for a memory of the pilot's name. "I thought you would be returning to Newark by now."

"I thought I'd stick around a day or two," the pilot said, grinning broadly, "I know you said you'd be catching a scheduled flight plane back, but—" He shrugged his shoulders to indicate it didn't make much difference to him.

"Maybe I can use you," Tom said. "I've got to fly north of Reykjavik. But you'd have to get a plane equipped with runners for landing on ice."

"It's already done, Mr. Bond," the pilot said. "And my plane is refueled and the motors checked. I can be ready to take off in half an hour."

"You've got yourself a job," Tom grinned. "Get going. I'm going to be on the phone while the plane's warming up."

"When you're ready to go, come over to number three hangar. That's where the plane is. If you don't see me around just ask for me. Ken Davis."

"O.K., Ken," Tom said.

He watched the trim back of the young pilot as he hurried away, then

continued on to the offices. In five minutes he was on the radio telephone in contact with the New York exchange. He gave the number of a large electrical corporation that he owned a block of shares in.

He asked for Dave Gunnarsen, president of the corporation. It took several minutes of hasty phoning at the other end to locate the man. Finally he was on the phone.

"Listen, Dave," Tom said. "You recognize my voice? Don't name any names, but do you?"

"Of course," Dave Gunnarsen answered. "The operator said you're calling from Iceland. What are you doing up there?"

"No time right now to go into that," Tom said. "Do you have a stenographer handy?"

"No," Dave said, "but I can hook in the tape recorder."

"Do that," Tom said. "I want something built." He waited until he heard the soft note that signaled every ten seconds that the conversation was being recorded.

"I want a frequency selector bank that will throw small relays for specific frequencies. The full eighty-eight notes of the piano keyboard. The leads from the relays are to go to a sliding contact bar made as small as possible, so that each relay can be connected to one key of an electrical typewriter. Incorporated into this setup must be an electric organ setup as small as feasible, so that the frequency that contacts any letter of the typewriter can also make that same frequency sound in a loudspeaker if a switch for that operation is in."

"Let me get this straight," Dave Gunnarsen said. "You want something that will type the letter a, say, when the note, a, is sounded by some outside source, and will in turn sound the same note over a loudspeaker when the key, a, is pressed manually."

"Right," Tom said. "And I want it as soon as possible. I want it completed and rushed up here by plane. And if it gets here tomorrow that won't be too soon."

"Hold on a minute," Dave said. There was a delay of three or four minutes. Then he was back. "It won't take as long as I thought," he said. "I just talked to Croft. He says it can take stock parts throughout and be divided into half a dozen simultaneous jobs. The men will work until it's finished. Croft says it can be done and tested by midnight. He's starting on it now. What the devil is it all about?"

"I haven't the time right now to go into that, Dave," Tom said. "Send it prepaid to the Reykjavik airport to Frank Bond. If necessary, charter a plane to send it in."

"O.K., Tah—uh, Frank," Dave said.

KEN DAVIS and his plane were in front of the huge hangar. The motors were running smoothly.

He grinned at the young pilot. The plane cabin was comfortably warm. He settled down in the co-pilot seat, noting the basket of food and the two huge thermos bottles of coffee.

Ken closed the door in the shell and contacted the tower for clearance. After a brief wait the tower clearance came.

Tom studied the pilot quietly as he maneuvered the plane and took off. Ken Davis lifted the plane in a steep climb until Reykjavik was far below.

"Where to?" he asked.

"Straight north about twenty miles," Tom said. And as Ken turned the plane's nose northward, "Been flying long?"

"Three years," Ken replied. "I started out to be an airline pilot, but an aunt died and left me thirty thousand dollars; I bought this plane and

went into business for myself. Most of my trips are charter flights to Florida. Ten people can charter my plane and land at any field in Florida actually cheaper than they can fly down in the commercial airliners. I have a deal with three resorts down there so that they steer vacationers from New York to me. You know, several people make reservations for a certain date at a resort, the resort telegraphs me and I contact the people and offer them club rates. If four go I break even. All over that up to the ten I can carry are clear profit."

"Nice racket," Tom agreed. "But what made you stick around up here? You're losing money."

He looked down. Charlie's head was in sight now, a small dot at the base of the mountain.

"Well, frankly," Ken Davis said, "I smelled some excitement, and I've always had a yen to get some. I thought I'd stick around and see what happened. Glad I did. For one thing, I get to see something of Iceland. I couldn't by myself. My insurance doesn't cover solo. Only hired flights."

Without warning the plane gave a violent lurch. When Tom and Ken recovered sufficiently to see what had happened, the tail of the plane was gone completely.

"Quick!" Ken said. "Parachutes in the locker!"

He deserted the controls and opened the locker door. Tom shoved Ken away when he tried to help him put on a chute.

"Put one on yourself," he said. "I know what to do."

Less than a minute later both men were in the air, dropping toward the white earth below. The plane struck half a mile to the north seconds later.

Tom searched the ground for signs of moving objects. To the north he saw a solitary moving dot. It would be out of sight when they reached the

ground. He memorized the northern skyline so that he would know which way to head.

They landed within fifty feet of each other.

"What the devil could have caused that explosion?" Ken asked. "It was from outside the plane or we would have been killed by the blast."

"It must have been a small bomb tied to the tail," Tom said. "Did you see anyone hanging around your plane before I came out?"

"No," Ken said. His forehead creased into a scowl. "There were people all right, but—" He turned grave eyes on Tom. "This may sound screwy," he said seriously, "but everything seemed to be funny. The motors started up cold and coughing, then the next second it was running smoothly, the motor blocks throwing off heat like they'd been going twenty minutes. It was almost like I'd blacked out. But I couldn't have, because I'd have keeled over, and known about it when I came to."

"Like this?" Tom said. He took the paper wrapped can from his pocket and sprayed a whiff at Ken, then walked away about fifteen feet and waited.

Ken remained standing where he was, a placid expression on his face, for five minutes. Then his face came to life. He uttered a startled exclamation.

"How the devil'd you get way over there?" he asked. "Are you a magician?"

"It seemed to you like I suddenly vanished and appeared over here the next instant?" Tom asked. At Ken's vigorous nod, "It was that stuff I sprayed at you. You blanked out and I walked over here."

Ken nodded understandingly. "That's what happened to me at the hangar," he said. "And now I can remember. There was a guy walking

past me. At least I thought there was. But he seemed to vanish in front of my eyes. Funny I forgot about him."

"ACCIDENTS ARE funny," Ken said, picking the two unbroken thermos bottles of coffee out of the wreckage of the plane. He handed them to Tom standing outside.

Tom set them down on the snow and looked back through the jagged hole in the fuselage in time to see Ken take two forty-five automatics out of a small cubbyhole compartment by the pilot's seat.

"Maybe these'll come in handy," Ken smiled grimly.

He looked at the pile of things that had been salvaged from the plane. "Lucky there was no fire," he said thankfully.

Tom was already pouring two steaming cups of coffee. He handed one to Ken.

"I wish we had a radio," he said. "The guns don't make us equal to those ten Russians. We need reinforcements. Let's drink our coffee quick and see what that solitary moving dot was on the other side of the rise."

"We might as well leave most of the stuff right where it is," Ken said.

An hour later they topped the rise, and ahead to the north the snow covered plane stretched in utterly bleak barrenness for at least five miles.

A brisk wind was rising from the northwest. Clouds of fine dry snow were picked up and carried along by it, obscuring the view.

And nowhere in that desolate scene was there a moving thing.

Tom turned and looked to the south. The bloated yellow sun was half hidden under the horizon. Before long it would be gone. There would be at least fourteen hours of darkness.

"Looks like we're in for it," Ken said uneasily. "That's a storm blow-

ing up." He looked at Tom closely. "You're pretty worried about that girl, aren't you?"

He saw his answer in Tom's expression. He started walking, but drew up short.

"What's that up ahead?" he asked. Tom looked where he pointed.

In the tricky light there seemed to be a solid mass of swirling snow with strangely black, curved lines, two of them, hovering outside it. Even when, for a brief moment, the swirling snow cleared, and it appeared in sharp outline, it was almost impossible for the mind to accept the evidence of the eyes.

It was at least a mile away, and even at that distance it was huge. It was covered with thick white fur.

"A mastodon!" Ken breathed.

The two men stood speechless as the huge creature came toward them. Now and then it disappeared behind a wall of snow or was obscured by a cloud of windblown snow.

Then suddenly it was only yards away. The deceptive distances had made it seem far away until the last moment. It was running in a lazy lope, its thick, furcovered ears flapping at each step. Its eyes were a bright yellow, its long, curving tusks jet black tipped with yellow metal that seemed to end in sharp points.

But so gracefully did it carry itself that its size seemed a distortion. It was coming directly at them, head low, in a rapid charge.

"God!" Ken muttered. "It sees us. Run!"

A blast trumpeted from the raised trunk of the furry Mammoth. Ken and Tom turned and ran.

AS TOM RAN, something heavy in his pocket bounced against him. He remembered it was the can of the mysterious spray chemical.

The ground was quivering under

his feet from the nearness of the charging beast, as he pulled off his gloves and let them drop to the snow.

The can stuck in his pocket. He pulled at it, looking over his shoulder and seeing the white furred Mammoth almost over him, its trunk stretched toward him, steam blowing from it in puffs. Then the can came free.

He held it over his shoulder and pressed on the valve.

The hollow roaring breath of the Mammoth stopped. The ground, suddenly, was no longer quaking under his feet. Still running, Tom took his finger off the valve and looked back.

The Mammoth had stopped, and was standing still, waving its trunk in a leisurely manner, almost as though it were in a zoo behind bars.

Tom stopped running. He sank to the snow and lay there panting, the cold air torturing his nostrils and throat as his lungs bellowed in and out, searching for oxygen for starved tissue.

Finally he raised his head and looked around, searching for Ken. Ken was coming toward him, a concerned expression on his face, his eyes studying the Mammoth warily.

Tom silently thanked God the beast had chosen to charge him instead of Ken.

"What happened to the brute?" Ken asked as he came up and sat down near Tom.

"I used that spray on him," Tom said. He struggled to his feet. "I'd better give him a good shot of it or he might wake up any minute."

"I'll do it," Ken said.

"No," Tom said. "I'm all right now. I've caught my breath."

Ken walked beside him as they approached the Mammoth. Tom put the can near the swaying trunk and pressed on the valve, holding his face away. He blinked his eyes—and the Mammoth was twenty feet away and

he was lying on his back in the snow.

"Damn!" he said in amazement. He knew what had happened. In spite of his precautions he'd gotten a whiff of the spray. Ken had brought him over where he was and made him lie down.

Ken was standing in front of the Mammoth, his face raised curiously, studying the giant furred brute. Tom got to his feet and joined him. Ken sensed his approach and turned smiling at him, and handed him the spray can.

"Thanks," Tom said. "That stuff acts without any warning at all. It's—magic!"

"So's this Mammoth," Ken said. "I've been examining it. Watch."

He slapped its trunk sharply half way up. The trunk curved to form a seat. Ken sat in it, and promptly the creature lifted him and sat him expertly on its head. The trunk dropped away and started swinging slowly again. Also the Mammoth's body started swaying in gentle rhythm, elephant-like.

Ken slid off, landing on his feet.

"Look at those metal ends on its tusks," he said. "They aren't gold. At least they seem too hard to be gold. And examine the brute's fur. It's plenty thick and pure white like it's been washed. But more important, it's been clipped so it's a uniform three inches in length. The hairs are thick enough so that you can see some of them are cut straight across and some at an angle."

Tom nodded his head in agreement as he took a look.

"It's domestic," he said. "Imagine it! Extinct Mammoths here in Iceland, domesticated, and never a hint of it before this. It would seem that someone would have seen them. Planes fly over this country often enough so that such a thing wouldn't have escaped detection."

"Unless they just came recently," Ken said. "They might be off that spaceship too."

"That's possible," Tom said. He looked speculatively at the Mammoth. "I wonder if he would be any good to carry us."

"If he got rambunctious we could give him another whiff," Ken grinned into the creature's yellow eyes.

THE WIND increased gradually to blizzard proportions, sharp biting snow born on its frigid breath. Snow that came from that on the glacier-ice terrain, and perhaps from clouds. Tom and Ken clung to the back of the white furred Mammoth, gripping handfuls of the bristle-like hair, to keep from being blown off rather than dislodged by the animal's motion.

They kept their faces buried in the white mat of fur, which served the double purpose of providing warmth against the sub-zero wind and of filtering the sand-like snow from the air they breathed.

They made no attempt to steer the Mammoth. They had long ago lost all sense of direction. Hours ago they had ceased talking. The wind plucked the words from their mouths, hurled them away, and flung sharp crystals of snow into their eyes and against their skin.

And to each came an occasional fear that the Mammoth would awaken from its somnambolic anesthesia to rear up and dislodge them, and trample them underfoot in rage. This fear was tempered by the almost certainty that if it were to awaken it wouldn't even realize they were on its back.

As the hours stretched on interminably, staying awake became a nightmare of torture. Each man would cling, then awake to find he had dozed for a fraction of a second and relaxed

his grip, with the realization that to fall meant certain death in the blizzard.

And as he huddled on the swaying, flat back in the carpet of long fur, Tom Farmer puzzled over the mystery of the Mammoth. Was it a creature of Mars or some other planet? Native to the world the girl had come from? Its metabolism was not an alcohol one. Its body gave off too much warmth.

The girl *had* to be from some other world. Never in the history of the Earth had any race of man used pure tonal notes for speech. Even if she were an immortal, born in some forgotten period of man's history, if there had existed any race using music for speech, it or at least some legend of it would have been handed down to the period of recorded history and legend.

Her being in Iceland would be a natural thing. Her body temperature was normally one degree below freezing. She, and any others like her that had arrived in a spaceship, would have chosen a climate and temperature as suited to their comfort as possible. More temperate parts of the earth would have been insufferably hot for them.

Where did the Russians come in? Had they escaped to Iceland to hide in its frozen stretches of uninhabited wasteland, and stumbled onto the ship and its inhabitants? And killed off all except the one whom Dr. Foster had found unconscious beside the trail over which he had been driving his motor sled?

Who was the man who had used the spray to go from Reykjavik to New York? A Russian from the same gang? It seemed likely. He would avoid having to present identifications and a passport and giving away his identity.

Those three men who had called at his house and asked for him hadn't

been foreigners, but native New Yorkers. That indicated nothing in any direction. There were still sympathizers with the old Russian dictatorship that would work with and hide members of this gang hiding here in the heart of Iceland.

Or the "little man who wasn't there", as the papers had dubbed him, could be one of those native American sympathizers who was keeping his visit to Iceland secret because he was a known sympathizer and it would be suspected that surviving members of the dictatorship were hiding in Iceland if it were known he had come.

Suppose those escaped Russians had possession of the spaceship and weapons unknown to modern earth science. They might be able to make a successful comeback and destroy millions of people in regaining their hold on half the world!

That must be it. To such men the destroying of a plane with seventy-five people on it to kill one man would be justified for their irrational Cause. They would think nothing of it. To them it would be just another phase of the War....

Suddenly Tom jerked his head up. He had been asleep. He had been sleeping because the Mammoth's back was no longer swaying, and the blizzard had died down to almost nothing. It was snowing, and snow fell off the back of his head as he jerked upright.

He blinked his eyes and looked around. Rising a few feet away was a snowcovered structure which, from its outlines under its snow blanket, was man-made!

EVER SO slowly he turned and reached back to Ken, shaking his shoulder gently. Ken mumbled, lifting his head sleepily.

"Shhh," Tom hissed. "We're here."

He watched Ken look around questioningly, slowly waking to the meanings of what he saw.

"That big door," Ken whispered, pointing.

Tom looked. He had missed that. It was a huge door like the sliding panel of a barn.

"This Mammoth is liable to be noticed any moment," he said softly to Ken. "We'd better slide down and hide somewhere."

He suited his actions to his words, landing with a muffled thud in the fresh snow. While he was still falling a loud, snorting blast trumpeted.

He looked up to see the beast rising above him, enormous, with yellow fire in its eyes, its thick black tusks poised to fall on him.

To one side was Ken, tossed by the rearing creature. But Tom barely noticed this. His eyes were fixed on the poised ebony tusks with their gold caps, sharply pointed. The giant monster seemed to prolong his upright pose in order to gloat at him. His trunk was lifted delicately out of the way. His eyes glittered in their wall of white fur.

Then on the air sounded a rapid series of quick, peremptory notes. The light in the Mammoth's eyes changed. He flapped his furry ears protestingly, then half pivoted and sank to all fours.

The series of notes sounded again. They came from some distance away. The Mammoth lifted his trunk and uttered a soft blast. Uttering a succession of muffled snorts he moved off in the direction of the sound, apparently forgetting about his prey.

"Out away from the building, Ken," Tom ordered quickly. "Cover yourself with snow so you can't be seen so easily."

They found a drift less than a hundred yards away, and burrowed into the soft snow, turning to watch

in the direction from which the singing voice had come.

A moment later an amazing sight emerged through the gloom. The Mammoth was returning. It was dancing and cavorting about a girl who was walking with indescribable grace in every step. From her lips came a series of clear notes that skipped around in three octaves, each note barely uttered and as quickly succeeded by another, in a manner than not even an operatic soprano could approach in skill and firmness.

The Mammoth would half bow, the curve of his tusks in the snow, then gambol off in a great circle to return and repeat his playful maneuvers, like a puppy grown unbelievably large.

Speechless with amazement, Tom and Ken watched as the pair approached the door of the snow-plastered building. The girl was wearing black fur in a costume something like a two piece swim suit. Her hair was encased in a large black fur turban-shaped hat with a trim of soft red like a skullcap. At her ears, and part of the headdress, were large, gleaming stones that reflected golden fire.

She went up to the door and pulled out a pin. She uttered more notes. The Mammoth inserted the metal tips of his tusks in indentations in the door and slid it sidewise.

Light flooded out, and with it sound. Tom and Ken gasped. Revealed through the opened door were other Mammoths, all of them the same pure white of the one that had carried them here. They were turning their heads in the direction of the door, trumpeting softly.

With a loud snort of joy the Mammoth lumbered through the doorway. The girl sounded several quick, commanding notes. He frisked his tail

and turned back, snorting impudently. His head went behind the door. It swung closed. The girl dropped the pin back in place, then started away in the direction she had come.

"Maybe we should let her know we're here," Ken whispered.

"No," Tom whispered back. "She isn't the one I met at Charlie's. We've got to wait and explore first. They may be in with the Russians, and if they are we'd just be committing suicide by letting her know we're here."

Silent, they watched as the night swallowed her up.

THEY LEFT the concealment of the snowdrift and followed the tracks of the girl in the snow.

"Wonder where they get all the hay it takes to feed that barn full of Mammoths," Ken asked after a few minutes.

"That is a thought," Tom said. "There were at least twenty of them. It would almost take an airlift to keep them fed. You know, this is getting more and more mysterious as we go along. Creatures that are supposed to have become extinct hundreds of thousands of years ago, girls over six feet tall that use singing in place of words for speech, and have a normal body temperature of one degree below freezing—"

"And still manage to raise mine a couple of degrees when I look at them," Ken said.

Tom smiled. "That's against the laws of thermodynamics," he said. "And there's the Russians who escaped when the dictatorship went down. How do they fit in?"

"You said the girl you met at Charlie's hadan ran from them," Ken said. "That would mean that they weren't friendly. Maybe she was out for a ride when she got conked out and Dr. Foster found—"

"Shhhh!" Tom silenced him. "We're

coming to something."

Emerging out of the eye-lulling gloom was another regular shape covered with snow. Its wall rose to a height of ten or twelve feet, and above that rose another few feet of snow.

The two crept up to it warily. Tom scraped some snow off, revealing a surface of concrete.

"A pillbox!" Ken exclaimed.

"Not so loud," Tom warned. "It's a concrete pillbox all right. I'm beginning to see a little daylight. This is man-made, and Russian. I've seen too many of theirs."

"That means this is one of the secret advance posts they built up," Ken said.

"It also explains the presence of those outlaws," Tom whispered. "This fortress was never discovered by the Allies in the last war, and with the collapse of the dictatorship the personnel garrisoned here just remained. There must be a ring of these pillboxes. Wonder what they guard—an airstrip or a mine?"

"I just had a weird thought on that," Ken said. "They were built to ring the spaceship those girls came in with their Mammoths."

"That's not so weird," Tom replied. "It's probably true. We'd better be quiet. There may be men inside this thing who can hear us."

"What about the girl's footprints in the snow?" Ken asked. "Let's go back to them and see where they go."

They followed their own tracks until they returned to her trail. It led past the pillbox and on into the darkness. They went slowly, trying to pierce the darkness in order to see what was coming in time to avoid being seen themselves.

Another concrete pillbox appeared. Tom and Ken followed the trail past it, then paused. They had heard the sound of voices from the pillbox.

Normal human voices.

They followed the sound. It was coming from a narrow slit high up in the concrete wall. The words were distinguishable now. But they were in Russian. Neither of them could understand it.

They returned to the tracks of the girl. Other pillboxes appeared. It was growing lighter. To the east the sky was a deep red. Shortly the sun would come up.

"We're right in the thick of it," Ken murmured worriedly.

"We have to risk it," Tom said. "We have to find out all we can. If we leave now they'll find our tracks and follow us anyway."

The next structure was a wooden shed. The girl's tracks led past it and onward in a straight line.

"Let's see what's in that shed," Tom whispered.

They went up to the door. It was fastened on the outside with a hasp and a bent piece of iron wire. Tom lifted out the wire and pushed the door open swiftly to keep it from squeaking.

Inside, stacked against the walls, were skis. In racks built for them were the motor driven propellers Tom had seen on the backs of the men at Charlie's hodan.

"This must be where they keep their travel outfits," he said.

"Let's take a couple of them and get out of here," Ken said earnestly. "I have a hunch if we're caught we won't live ten seconds."

"I thought you wanted excitement," Tom said.

"I did," Ken said, "but this is too big. For one thing, the world should know what's going on here."

"That's true," Tom said with a worried frown. "Suppose you take one of these outfits and go back to Reykjavik and get help while I stay and see

what it's all about."

"I'm not going to run out on you," Ken said emphatically. "If you stay, I stay."

"I'm serious," Tom said. "In another half hour it will be daylight. Take an extra pair of skis and an extra power unit with you and head about ten degrees to the right of where the sunlight on the horizon is strongest, and when you've gone a mile or two bury them in the snow. If I have to run for it and can find it I'll have a better chance of getting away."

"How about you going and me staying?" Ken asked.

Tom shook his head. "It's a dangerous trip and I'm an old man," he grinned. "I'll wait until you bring a plane to take me out."

"You just hate hard work," Ken said. "All right, I'll go."

"There should be a large package for me at the airport," Tom said. "It'll contain a machine which will make it possible to talk with these girls. But the first thing you must do when you get to Reykjavik is call this number in Washington and whoever answers, just say A B sixty-three, and keep repeating that to each person until you get someone who says, 'He ain't here.' Then you say, 'Oh dear, and I so wanted to have lunch with him.' Can you remember that?"

Ken repeated it slowly.

"You'll be connected to a person who can handle this in a hurry," Tom said. "Tell him only about the Russians and the pillboxes. That's enough. Don't tell him who you are. He won't ask. The fact that you got to him will be enough."

TOM WATCHED Ken from the darkness of the doorway until he was lost to sight in the gloom. Even

then he waited, listening for some cry or noise that would indicate discovery of Ken's flight.

Finally, sure that he had gotten away undetected, he let a long breath of relief escape. Then he left the wooden shack and followed the tracks the girl had left in the snow, going at a slow trot.

The gloom of night was softening. It was possible to see much farther now. In every direction were the pill-boxes. If there were any sentries it would be impossible to escape detection; but there was little likelihood of it. The Russians would never think of anyone being here.

The tracks curved now, going in close to one of the concrete pillboxes and hugging it as they went around it out of sight.

Tom slowed to a walk, stealing forward cautiously. He came to a steel door in the concrete wall. The tracks ended there. She had gone inside.

He listened against the door. No sound came from within. Cautiously he tried the door. It opened under his touch. He pushed it open farther, ready to spring back.

Inside a single small light globe was casting a feeble glow, revealing the place to be empty. He stepped in and closed the steel door behind him.

Around him was a pattern of order and wartime complexity. A dozen anti-tank machineguns perched in their steel frames inside the perimeter of the circular stronghold. Racks of shell clips were stacked in vertical tiers.

Tom took all this in grimly. If all the pillboxes were similarly equipped the place could withstand a full scale attack when fully manned.

In the center of the floor was an opening. It led to a circular well in which a steel staircase spiraled downward.

The bottom of the staircase was visible. Tom went down slowly, setting each foot down on the next step with infinite care.

A myriad of sounds crept to him from the underground labyrinth. Sharp sounds of metal, the murmur of voices, the dizzy speech-melody of the alien females. It all had the quality of coming from a distance rather than close at hand.

Tom kept his eyes fixed below, to the small area of the passageway when anyone who intended coming up the stairway must appear first.

He froze suddenly as two figures came into view. When they passed out of sight without pausing or looking up, he relaxed.

After a moment he started down again, his legs feeling rubbery under him. He was fully conscious of his danger now. If he were seen an alarm could be sounded that would alert the whole nest of pillboxes. If he escaped he could be shot down by guns capable of churning the glacier on which they rested in their concrete emplacements to chipped ice in a few moments.

Then why, he asked himself, didn't he follow Ken? Why not take the sensible course and let the Iceland and United States Governments take care of it?

A face rose in his mind. It was the face of the strange girl in Dr. Foster's motor sled, feigning unconsciousness, but accepting him as an ally. The bond of understanding that had existed between them then hadn't seemed to have come into existence at all, but just was there.

Tom forced her out of his mind, shaking his head. It wouldn't do to daydream. He would need all of his senses alert or he wouldn't live to see her again.

He reached the bottom of the spiral stairs. Which way should he go? He

was standing in the intersection of two passageways. He could go in four directions.

He listened intently, trying to place the direction of the various sounds. In one direction there seemed to be total silence. He walked in that direction.

THE STEEL-LINED passageway led in a straight line for nearly half a mile. At intervals of a hundred yards it intersected passages running at right angles to it, and at each intersection was a spiral stairway leading upward to a pillbox.

There were no sounds now. This section of the maize under the fortifications seemed deserted.

But now Tom came to the end of the passageway. His further progress was blocked by a steel door that covered the whole cross section of the tunnel.

There was a wheel in the center of the door from which rods radiated, firmly held in holes in the frame around the door. By spinning the wheel the rods would draw in, leaving it free.

Tom studied the door and decided it must be an ammunition storeroom. He spun the wheel. The door opened a few inches by itself. He left it that way and leaned forward, trying to see through the narrow opening.

There seemed to be a continuation of the tunnel on the other side, rather than a storeroom. He pushed the door open and stepped through, closing it and swinging the wheel on that side to bolt it again.

The tunnel was different now. Instead of being prefabricated and bolted together in sealed joints it was pieced together with welded seams. It soon began to slant downward, curving gradually to the right. There were iron bars tackwelded to the floor to prevent feet from slipping,

and a railing to hold onto.

The silence was so absolute that he worried about the loudness of his breathing and the unavoidable scraping of his feet.

He tried to estimate how far he was descending. Eventually he was sure he had gone down at least five hundred feet below the surface.

The passage ended with another door similar to the first with one difference. There was a peephole covered by a sliding metal plate.

Tom slid it back slowly. To his disappointment the other side was covered by a thick coating of ice, as though water had dripped over it, freezing into a thick accumulation.

Light filtered through the ice strongly, bringing images too greatly distorted by refraction to make out. As he studied them he detected movement.

He turned his head sideways and listened. Voices came faintly. Suddenly a voice sounded near at hand, barely muffled by the door. It was an American voice.

"You'll get a flogging if Alex finds out you took time out to smoke, Mick," it said.

"Ahh, lay off, Ralph," Mick's voice answered. "Why don't you take a smoke yourself?"

"I think I will," came the voice of Ralph. There were two minutes of silence. The ice over the peephole brought a flash of yellow light to indicate that Ralph was lighting a cigaret. They were just the other side of the door. Tom's heart beat loudly in excitement.

"What d'you think of all this?" Mick's voice came.

"I think we're in for trouble when they cut the warrior queen loose and thaw her out," Ralph answered. "It may be a million years since she started out to conquer the world, but when she wakes up she'll be just as

hot about it. The ones we've got so far are just buck privates in the Martian army, all except that one that got away."

"Yeah," Mick said, chuckling. "They cut her out first because she was in a cage on top that Mammoth, while all the others were like statues of people in motion. She thought they would help her when she told them all about the plans of the queen to subdue the earth."

"But was she plenty warlike when she found out they planned on thawing out the others and helping them," Ralph said. "She still doesn't know it's been at least a million years since the ships landed them here. None of them do. They think the ships went back for another load of Mammoths and girl warriors!"

"I wonder what really happened," Mick said.

"They got a whiff of the sleep spray," Ralph said matter-of-factly. "The experiments of that Russian scientist showed that when a person is frozen while under its effect he'll still be alive when he's thawed out. That proves it. Otherwise at least the Mammoths would be dead."

THE ICE over the peephole suddenly gave way, falling with a clatter. Swiftly Tom slid the cover in place.

"What was that?" Mick's voice came nervously, muffled by the metal.

"Just some ice breaking loose, stupid," Ralph's voice answered tauntingly.

"Maybe it's someone coming through this door," Mick's voice sounded. "If I had it to do over again I'd never come up here in Iceland to hunt for Uranium ore."

"You and me both," Ralph said bitterly. Tom slid the cover just enough to reveal a crack of light. The voices were louder. Ralph's voice became

dreamy. "Five years," he said. "At least I think it's been five years. I have a wife and two kids back in Detroit." He uttered a snorting laugh. "They're living off my life insurance by now. Martha must be in high school. And Jimmy is in the third or fourth grade. Maybe they even have a new dad—and a half sister or brother."

"Maybe," Mick said softly.

Tom slid the peephole cover open farther. He could see clearly now.

The two men on the other side of the door were leaning against the ice wall of the raw glacier itself, in a cubbyhole indentation where they couldn't be seen. They wore fur parkas. Beards covered their faces, leaving only their eyes and cheeks exposed.

Past them in the distance was a huge cavern. It was at least two hundred yards across. On the far side Tom saw a scene that made his senses reel.

There were at least fifty men, all dressed in fur parkas, working with hatchets and small picks on a white wall of ice. Ten of them were concentrated on what appeared to be an ice statue of a Mammoth on which rode one of the Martian amazon warriors.

At another place along that fantastic wall of ice was a canvas tent that apparently covered something as large as a Mammoth. Tom nodded his head. Under such a tent the temperature could be raised gradually to thaw the creature out slowly.

He turned his attention to the two men, Mick and Ralph, again. They were silent, puffing idly on their cigarets and looking at their feet with faraway expressions, lost in memories of home.

Tom hesitated, then placed his lips to the opening in the door and

his voice came in a whisper.

"Don't move or say anything," he said. "This is a friend. Nod your heads if you hear me."

He looked quickly. The two men had startled looks on their faces. They turned in his direction. He saw their eyes grow round. They had seen him or at least his eye in the hole in the door.

"There will be government troops here in a few days," Tom whispered. "I've been listening to you talk. Could I open this door and you slip in here with me without anyone seeing you?"

"The only thing that's kept us from doing that long ago," Ralph said, "is the fact that there's no way to open it from this side."

Tom waited for no more. He twisted the wheel. The door swung open. Ralph and Mick slipped through. There was wonder and hope in their eyes.

"You aren't a Russian, at any rate," Ralph said.

"I'm Tom Farmer," Tom said, deciding not to carry on his masquerade as Frank Bond.

"I've heard of you," the man named Mick said, nodding. "You're the one experimenting with immortality? You should be interested in these amazons. They claim to be immortal themselves."

"I surmised as much," Tom said. "But there's time for that later. Do you know anything about the layout of things here?"

"Do we?" Ralph said. "Listen, Dr. Farmer. For years we've had it all planned. A long time ago we killed a guard and one of us took his clothes, and managed to roam all over the place before he was discovered. They shoved him back in with us because they need every slave they've got. After they flogged him senseless. But every one of us knows where the am-

munition dumps are, the food store-rooms, everything. We have it planned down to the last detail how we'd do it—if we ever found an open door. They make us live down here in the ice cavern, throwing in food for us."

"O.K.," Tom cut in. "Now's our chance."

"Not now," Mick said. "Tonight. They shut off the lights for eight hours every twenty-four. When they do that we can slip out."

"We'd better go back now," Ralph said. "We can pass the word around so everyone's ready. Just be here with the door open. That's all."

TOM WATCHED through the peephole as the hours wore on. His eyes noted Mick and Ralph as they passed from one group of workers to another, whispering their message. As each man learned it he looked in Tom's direction furtively.

But work continued unabated, so that the Russian guards Tom could just make out on a platform half way up the open shaft elevator would not become suspicious.

He studied those guards, wondering how they could be so blind to what was going on. Perhaps they weren't. It worried him.

The elevator, Tom surmised, had been designed for the express purpose of lifting the Mammoths to the surface. This whole setup, he now saw, was built for bringing the Martian invasion army back to life.

It must have been started years ago. Ralph's statement that he had been here five years dated it as having been started before the war that brought about the collapse of the dictatorship. It was no wonder the Russians hadn't used Iceland as a stepping stone. They hadn't wanted to call attention to this secret operation!

How careful they must have been!

Thousands of tons of concrete flown in. Other thousands of tons of steel. Scientists and the cream of the most loyal men, with the number three man of the dictatorship in personal charge...

The white statue of the warrior queen was finally free of the main ice wall. A tent was lowered over it from above, the mechanism that lowered it hidden out of the range of the peephole.

From the other tent the limp form of one of the Martian girls had been carried to the elevator, to be quickly lifted above, the elevator dropping almost immediately, empty again.

Two hours after the tent was lowered over the warrior queen she was carried out. It was that quick; but it would be, since her body temperature was normally one degree below freezing. Tom wondered what the temperature of the ice was at this depth. It must be several degrees below freezing or the Martian women would have recovered consciousness ages ago, imprisoned in solid ice and unable to breathe.

The warrior queen wore the same black fur two piece outfit as the others, but in addition wore a long red cape. She was whisked up in the elevator.

When it came down one of the warrior women was on it. She walked across the ice floor until she passed out of range of the peephole. Half an hour later she came into view again, leading a slowly lumbering Mammoth. When they were on the elevator it rose, creaking under its burden.

Nothing more happened. The men in the cavern continued working, chipping away ice. The chips of ice were loaded into mine cars on a narrow gauge track strung across the uneven floor, leading to the elevator. Although none of the cars were taken

there, it was obvious that from time to time the ice chipped away was hauled to the surface and dumped somewhere, perhaps scattered out so that it wouldn't be noticed from the air by any plane passing over.

And finally there were shouted orders from the Russians above. The working men walked away from the elevator until they were out of sight.

Half an hour later the lights went out, leaving a strange, eerie luminescence that, Tom realized, came from the ice itself, brought down from the surface through the many feet of solid glacier.

HE PUSHED open the door and waited. The lights in the steel-lined tunnel had gone out at the same time as the others. He waited just inside the door. And shortly the first figure appeared, stealing forward silently.

"It's me, Ralph," came a hoarse whisper. "Everything all right?"

"Yes," Tom replied.

Ralph chipped a piece of ice loose with a pick he held in his hand, and tossed it far out in the cavern. It landed with a noise that could be easily heard.

Soon after, other figures appeared.

"Let's move into the tunnel," Ralph whispered. "Our plan is to move forward and make room for the others until the last man is in, then close the door and bolt it. That way we can't be attacked from the rear. Then we move out into the underground system, each man taking his objective as we have drilled it into us. You're just to stay out of the way."

Tom led the way to the upper door with Ralph walking beside him. When he had opened it he stepped aside at Ralph's whispered command.

The silent men crept past him, each armed with a hatchet or icepick. He

counted them. There were sixty-three altogether. He wondered if it would be enough. Certainly the few Russians he had seen at Charlie's hodan weren't all of them. There must be at least several hundred stationed here, and perhaps more if additional dictator faithfuls had fled here when the regime collapsed.

When the last man had crept past him and vanished down the passage into the maize of underground tunnels he stepped back into the passageway leading downward, prepared to close the door and wedge the wheel lock if any Russians should appear.

The silence continued. He thought of the warrior queen. Pity welled up inside him for her and her hosts of female warriors. He knew from his geology that when she had landed here Iceland had been part of the great northern continent stretched across the Atlantic from America to Europe.

The world had been young. Her Mammoths had been armed to fight the reptilian giants. The great ice sheet had made the northern hemisphere a land of promise with its freezing temperatures.

Now, as she took her next breath, with no conscious realization of the passage of the centuries since her last one, she would not know that all there was for her to conquer with her forces was a few hundred square miles of a small island, and that when she tried it she would bring the whole modern world down on her.

Suddenly the air was shattered by the sharp report of a shot a great distance away, followed by a scream. Immediately after, sirens began to scream their alarm.

Tom swallowed nervously. The battle was on. Had he done right? Some of these men who had been slaves would be killed. They were innocent. Wouldn't it have been better to wait

until trained armed forces came?

The memory of those anti-tank machine guns rose in his thoughts. Blood had to be spilled in any case, and this way, if the slaves succeeded, every life it cost would save perhaps dozens of soldiers.

The wail of the sirens rose to a deafening scream. Tom saw a man pause at an intersection in the tunnel fifty feet away, raise a gun, with his attention fixed on the passage to the left. A deafening roar sounded above the sirens and the man fell.

Another man appeared, looked Tom's way and waved his arm, then ran on. Tom felt better. The slaves were armed.

Suddenly the noise of the sirens died down. It was sudden, indicating a cut line, since the siren that produced the sound broadcast it over a loudspeaker network. The sounds of shots that had been drowned out by the siren could be heard. From their rapidity there must be several pitched battles raging in different directions.

Then, seemingly at a signal, the shooting stopped. Thinking it perhaps only a lull, Tom waited for it to start in again. When it didn't, hope and despair struggled with each other. Had the captive workers been wiped out? Or had they gained the upper hand, the Russians surrendering?

He decided to go at least as far as the first intersecting tunnel and try to find out. When he got to it he looked both ways. He saw a body a few feet away. It was one of the Russians. He went to it and picked up the heavy automatic laying on the metal floor near an outstretched hand.

Straightening, he glanced quickly behind him to make sure no one was in sight. When he looked around again he blinked his eyes in amazement.

Disbelief made him glance down at

his feet. The body had vanished. The tunnel had vanished. He was standing in snow. The heavy gun had simply ceased to exist in his hand.

He lifted his head again, comprehension dawning. He had taken a whiff of the sleep spray—and before him stood the warrior queen complete with her scarlet cape, flanked by a hundred or more of her warrior maids.

And to either side and behind him stood men. The workers from the ice cavern and the Russians. On all their faces was a look of peaceful repose. Only he had recovered

TOM LOOKED around at the ring of Mammoths that surrounded the whole group, facing toward him. On the back of each was a girl gripping a long, spear-like rod of utterly black substance.

Bitterness crept into his thoughts. He had never given the warrior queen a thought. Of course her female soldiers had been marking time, waiting until their queen was thawed out so she could command them.

The revolt had been three sided. The Martian warriors had used some of the sleep spray, probably dropping it in the ventilation system. He had recovered first because he had breathed in less of it than the others.

His eyes returned to the regal figure of the queen. Pity welled up in him again. How quickly her dream of conquering the world would be shattered!

A singing voice uttered a series of dizzily cascaded notes. The eyes of the queen and all the other girls turned on Tom. It had been noticed that he was awake.

The warrior queen uttered a swiftly speeded melody, motioning him forward. He walked toward her, wondering what would happen. Would he be killed?

He came to a halt ten feet away from her. He studied her. Her figure was as perfect as that of the other, her face utterly beautiful, but different in various little ways as are all human faces.

She uttered another series of notes, questioningly. Tom shook his head.

"I speak this way," he said firmly, just to show her a sample of the difference.

The warrior queen arched her head, listening in surprise as he spoke. Then she half turned her head and darted a few rapid notes at the girls behind her. They replied. Tom surmised they had told her of the "strange" speech of the native earthlings, but she hadn't believed them.

There seemed to be some distraction among the mounted girls on the opposite side of the circle of Mammoths. They had been twisting around and looking away toward the south. Now they suddenly burst into excited sing-talking.

The object of their interest appeared, coming between two of the Mammoths into the circle. It was one of the warrior girls. She gave the huddled unconscious men a wide berth and approached Tom.

He recognized her as she came closer. It was the Martian girl he had met at Charlie's lodan. She stopped abruptly, recognizing him. Her expression softened. She walked up to him and reached out, touching one cold finger to his forehead gently, then drew back.

Her eyes turned away from him. He followed her gaze and received another surprise. The warrior queen and all her female soldiers were prostrate in an attitude of obeisance!

Tom looked from them back to her. She uttered a singing command. Instantly the amazon girls rose. Only the warrior queen remained prostrate.

And as the girl walked with slow grace over to her and touched a finger to her bare shoulder, Tom began to realize that everyone had had it wrong. The supposed Warrior Queen was in reality the equivalent of a general, and the girl who had been in a cage on the back of a mammoth was the queen!

For several minutes the air was filled with the rapid sing-talk, the real warrior queen doing most of it. From the looks the others cast to the south in the direction from which she had come, they were discussing something. Could it be Ken with reinforcements?

Tom stepped forward and tapped the queen on the shoulder.

"Look," he said. "You musn't fight. They'll be friendly." He groaned at their looks of puzzlement. It was impossible for them to understand him.

The queen spoke to her general, who sang out a loud command. Part of the circle of mounted Mammoths turned and started toward the south at a slow but distance-covering gait.

In the gap formed by their departure Tom could see a mass of moving figures several miles away. The figures resolved into moving army tanks. His heart sank. The guns in those tanks could wipe out the Martians easily. It would be slaughter.

Desperately he gripped the queen by the shoulders and shook her. It had been too quick for any of the others to stop him. When he released her there were gasps of horror rising from all sides.

She stared at him, a strange expression on her face. He shook his head, saying "NO!". He pointed toward the Mammoths racing to the south and made a gesture of calling them back.

She continued to stare at him. He remembered how she had come up to

him and touched his forehead. It had been a Martian sign of friendship.

He reached out and touched her forehead in the same way, looking into her eyes pleadingly. Then he pointed to the riders to the south again and repeated his gesture of calling them back.

Decision appeared in her eyes. She uttered a sing-speech order. There was a moment of silence, then a loud chorus of voices singing the same notes rose—loud enough to carry for miles.

To Tom's relief the Mammoths and their riders stopped, turned around, and started back.

THERE FOLLOWED days of increasing activity. Tom had gone to meet the army of tanks that had been housed just outside Reykjavik since the war.

He had been recognized. Ken had climbed out of a tank and rushed to him.

"You son of a gun," he exclaimed happily. "All my worry for nothing. You don't have a scratch. Why the devil didn't you tell me that 'Joe sent me' rigamarole would enable me to speak directly to the President himself? Why didn't you tell me you were Dr. Farmer? The telegraph man knew it. Didn't you trust me?"

After that had come a half hour of ticklish sign language that had convinced the Martian girl warriors that they would not be molested.

The Russian renegades were given good doses of the sleep spray and loaded into tanks which sped south to lock them up for deportation to Russia. Some of the workers went too, but many of them elected to remain as teachers to show the coming army of workers how to chip the rest of the Martian army out of the ice and bring them to life.

The lieutenant commanding the

tank corps rapidly took command of the whole setup. Tom, finding himself with nothing to do, soon sought out the Martian queen. When they met they realized they had been looking for each other, and laughed. It was the first he had heard one of the Martians laugh, and it surprised him in its normalcy.

From then on they were together most of the time.

The device he had ordered to enable him to talk the song-language of Mars hadn't shown up yet. He soon found out it was just as well.

He gave the queen the name, Martia, and she quickly learned how to form sounds with her mouth by studying the positions of his tongue and lips. She was delighted when she first learned to pronounce the name he had given her, and also his.

She would say, "Tom," and touch his forehead with a finger.

Ken kept Tom up on developments. The Russians had flown in thousands of tons of hay and stored it in vast vaults in the glacier. That was the source of food for the Mammoths. There were also ammunition dumps and food stores sufficient for an army for many years.

But most of the time Tom and Martia paid little attention to what went on around them. They were developing a system of picture writing by which they were learning more about each other and about the things they each wanted to know.

It was slow, but eventually Tom managed to make her understand the extent of the changes in the Earth since she and her subjects had landed.

It amazed, then depressed her. Then she seemed to draw aloof from him in her mind. Her interest became more intellectual than personal.

Laboring under this strained relationship, Tom painstakingly drew

pictures to tell her of his experiment in immortality. She understood the pictures of atoms and molecular formations he drew. Slowly she began to comprehend what he was telling her.

When full realization came, she threw off her reserve, pointing to herself and then him, and nodding vigorously.

Now she began to tell her own story. The Earth had been uninhabited by man so far as the Martians had known. They had gained space travel and scouts had brought back tales of the large inhabitable areas of the planet.

They had come, landing many separate forces. Hers had been one of the last to leave Mars. Colonies were already in existence when she came.

As she portrayed that part of her story her eyes suddenly widened. She took another sheet of paper and hastily drew a series of pictures. Tom translated their meaning in his mind.

She had said that he must be a direct descendant of the original Martian colonizers!

It was true. Tom realized that. The remains of Mammoths in the northern ice, found all over the Arctic, the lack of a missing link in man's ancestry, the existence side by side of fossilized skeletal remains of highly developed modern man beside those of manlike animals still too far removed from modern man to be called an ancestor.

And during this mutual exchange that brought out the whole story of man's past and his origin on Mars, Tom felt himself drawn more and more to Martia. She had sketched the future progress of his experiment in immortality. He knew that in another century he would be as she was, with a body temperature near zero, and that barring accidental death, he

would live many more centuries.

Yet, with all this, something he couldn't understand was troubling him. More and more.

Martia noticed this finally.

"Tom," she said.

He looked up at her. Her face showed tender affection. She reached

out and touched his forehead.

As her finger touched him he realized what was troubling him.

He reached up and took her face between his hands and pulled it toward him. She was unresisting, curious.

Then delighted...

THE END

A KING PASSES...

★ By L. A. BURT ★

THE CONFRATERNITY of science-fiction is figuratively wearing the black arm-band of mourning. The recent death of Edgar Rice Burroughs has cast a dark pall over activities of the fraternity—and yet there is not the sadness that one might think.

For Edgar Rice Burroughs created a world which will never die. Yes, we've heard the praises of his "Tarzan" sung to high heaven and we admit they are deserved.

But to the genuine science-fictionist, it was another world of Burroughs' creation which was the dominant one. In fact, two other worlds. First the immortal "Barsom" or Martian stories. Secondly, the "Pellucidar" or center-of-the-Earth stories.

These two imaginative worlds were as real to the fans of Burroughs as anything here on Earth. The reason for this is not hard to see. The Martian stories with their personal identification of Burroughs with John Carter, were almost autobiographies rather than works of fiction. What reader didn't find Barsom, Helium, Tars Tarkas, the jeddaks—more believable than the Napoleonic Wars?

The mythical Martian kingdoms of Burroughs, the primitive imaginative islands of Earth (The Land That Time Forgot)—all, were fact, not fancy. Burroughs in translating the dream world of his mind on paper, gave readers a breadth of insight into imagination, which has been approached by no other.

It is the custom for some ones to sniff disdainfully at Burroughs' efforts, to decry them as not being "literature." If any judgment was ever false, this was it. They say that the test of great fictional literature is the living characters it leaves behind. Robinson Crusoe, Sidney Carton—these are cited as examples. If this is so, Burroughs wins the literary test hands down. Tarzan, John Carter, David Innes—these are immortal characters who will never die.

The king of science fiction is dead—but not the memory of the king!...

A MATTER OF SIZE

★ By JON BARRY ★

"MARS, JUPITER, Saturn..." the words flash so glibly from the science-fiction fan these days, that they almost do not carry any conviction. We talk about the Solar System as if it was as clear in our mind's eye as a lighted match. Actually this is far from the case, and if you asked any friend to give you a scale model of the Solar System, the chances are a thousand to one that he would not be able to. He's taken too many interstellar voyages to think about it!

It's refreshing therefore, to go back, occasionally to fundamental considerations. Actually what would the Solar System look like in a scale model? The astronomer, Sir John Herschell's model is as good as any. Take a look at it—and really get impressed!

We start with the Sun—make it a ball two feet in diameter. Mercury would be a mustard seed one hundred and sixty-four feet away, Venus a pea two hundred and eighty-four feet away and the Earth also a pea four hundred and thirty feet away. Mars would only be a pin-head six hundred and fifty-four feet away from the two foot ball. The asteroids would be grains of dust between a thousand and two thousand feet away while Jupiter would be a good sized orange about a quarter of a mile away. Saturn would be a small orange at two-fifths of a mile. Uranus a small plum and three-quarters of a mile, and Neptune a larger plum at a mile and a quarter. And lonesome Pluto would come into the picture at three and a quarter miles!

This little sketch gives some idea of the fantastic vastness of the Solar System. It takes one's breath away to think about it. When you next read a science-fiction story and it's interplanetary, just stop and think of this Herschellian picture of the Universe. If you're just the least bit bored or your mental appetite is even slightly jaded, you'll have to sit up and marvel once more. Imagine picturing Earth as a pea four hundred and fifty feet away from a two foot ball, the Sun!